

Vermont Crisis Alternative Program Proposal

Fact Sheet

- Developed by Lenora Kimball and Shery Mead with guidance from Vermont Psychiatric Survivors and the Futures Peer Support Program Development Workgroup
- Proposal to create 5-bed¹, community-based “crisis alternative” program for people in crisis to work through their distress in a humane and compassionate manner
- Program will utilize experiential knowledge of people in recovery and operate on core principles of *Hope, Choice, Personal Responsibility, Mutuality, Respect, and Crisis as an Opportunity for Growth*
- Program will accept anyone in crisis who is willing to abide by basic safety guidelines, who has a residence to return to, and who willingly desires to approach crisis in a non-traditional way
- Program will be staffed and run by well-trained peers who have had the experience of extreme emotional distress
- Program Proposal includes:

Program Description: High-level view of program fundamentals

Potential Location: Description and details of recommended site location and community identified to fit the needs of the program, including:

- Recommendation to obtain facility (rent, lease, purchase or build)
- Physical space arrangement
- Zoning and regulatory assessment

Budget: Initial monetary outlay and cost of on-going operations

Licenses and Insurance: Requirements and recommendations

Staffing Plan: Head count, staffing costs, organizational chart, and staff training plan

Operations Manual: Proposal for on-going operations policies and procedures

Referral Process: Procedure proposal

Relationship Management: Model for coordination with other agencies and providers

¹ The Futures Peer Support Program Development Workgroup has recommended a 3-bed facility.

**Futures Peer Support Program Development Workgroup:
Recommendations for the Development of a Vermont Crisis Alternative (VCA)
Program**

Recommendation #1: The Workgroup approves the VCA Program Proposal submitted by Lenora Kimball and Shery Mead as an excellent framework to take the VCA project to the next phase. While not all members of the Workgroup agree with all parts of the plan, we agree that the plan largely responds to the Workgroup's Request for Proposals and covers all of the areas that we need to implement as written or with modifications.

Recommendation #2: The Workgroup recommends that the VCA program should be budgeted \$400,000 per year based on the following issues:

- Equality of funding compared to other Futures Programs (e.g. DA Crisis beds)
- Current funding would not support adequate staffing
- Additional funding is needed for start-up costs (e.g. rehab/purchase of facility).

Recommendation #3: The Workgroup recommends that the VCA program operate as a 3-bed facility. Developers of the program should also consider building in focused peer-support options during the day that would include other peers and community members.

Recommendation #4: The Workgroup recommends the following next steps:

- 1) **Select a sponsoring organization:** DMH should negotiate with Vermont Psychiatric Survivors (VPS) to act as the sponsoring organization for the next phase of the development of the VCA Program.
- 2) **Create an Advisory Board for the VCA Program:** The Advisory Board will be created by VPS and will oversee the hiring of a Project Coordinator and the creation of the program. Members of the Futures Peer Support Program Development Workgroup should have the option of joining the Advisory Board assuming they are willing to accept the roles and responsibilities of board members.
- 3) **Hire a full-time Project Coordinator using a competitive, widely-advertised process:** The hiring process would focus on hiring someone who could eventually become the Executive Director of the program once it becomes independent, with the understanding that the VCA Board of Directors of the new, independent program would have the ultimate decision of who is hired into that position.
- 4) **Develop the program and establish 501©3 status:** The Project Coordinator would work with the Advisory Board under Vermont Psychiatric Survivors to choose the location, create the program, establish the program's 501©3 status, and begin operations. As part of the process to establish 501©3 status, a program Board of Directors will be created to assume oversight of the program. Members of the program Advisory Board may choose to join the Board of Directors, and members of the program's local community may also join the board.

Recommendation #5: The location of the program should be decided by the VCA Advisory Board and Project Coordinator based on the VCA Program Proposal and additional recommendations and information compiled by members of the Workgroup.

Recommendation #6: The Workgroup recommends that the VCA Project Coordinator and Advisory Board choose the specific training model based on what is most cost effective and useful. The training models recommended in the VCA Program Proposal could be considered as a potential model.